The Impact of Afghan crisis on Pakistani Society since 1979 till date

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Abstract:

The Soviet and US invasions of Afghanistan in December 1979 and October 2001 in the wake of tragic incident of 9/11, respectively, were major causes of worldwide anxiety and a turning points in the history which changed the world's geo-political equation. Pakistan being an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan and a historical US ally became frontline state on both occasions not only to safe guard its own interest but to stop the expansionism of Communism and the threat of Al-Qaeda and Taliban to reach beyond the region. Although Pakistan, US and their allies claimed to be victorious in both wars against former USSR(1979-1989) and War on terror (2001-till date), but its deep rooted long term impacts implicated Pakistan in a social, political and economic quagmire. Afghanistan Crisis since 1979-till date posed alarming threats to the internal and external security of Pakistan because of the huge influx of Afghan refugees in Pakistan which culminated in the spread of menace of terrorism; militancy and extremism; Talibanization of Pakistani society and ethno-political crisis in Karachi and in the province of Baluchistan started after 9/11. In addition, Pakistani society has also suffered from huge supply of drug and Narcotics, Kalashnikov culture and lawlessness due to Afghan crisis.

It is a common phenomenon that whenever a war erupts on a large scale in any country, its fallout is felt in its immediate neighbouring countries as well. Afghanistan is not an exception. Situated in the Center of Asia and bordered by Iran on the west (936 km), by Pakistan on the east and south (2,430 km), and by Turkmenistan (744 km), Uzbekistan(137 km), and Tajikistan (1,206 km) on the north; a narrow strip, the Wakhan ,extends in the northeast along Pakistan to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China (76 km)¹, Afghanistan is completely a landlocked country .Three decades of unabated war left unprecedented repercussions not only on Afghanistan but on its neighbours as well. However, Pakistan being a front line state, on both the occasions, against the expansionism of communism and war on terror after 9/11 respectively was badly affected by Afghan imbroglio as compared to other neighbours of Afghanistan.

In the very outset, the Soviet Union's military adventurism of Afghanistan in December, 1979 was considered to be a good war by the Pakistani establishment and viewed it to be a welcome relief, because, it not only made Pakistan an important player, being a front line state, on the stage of the world's politics, but it had also boomed Pakistan's economy by virtue of foreign aids.² Pakistan also attained nuclear capability, military assistance and progress in socio-economic areas during the same period. However, as the time passed on, all these achievements proved to be cosmetic while its complexities seemed to be very deep rooted in the shape of future storms of Terrorism, sectarianism, ethnic strife, Talibanization of Pakistani society and so forth. The invasion of Afghanistan by USSR in 1979 coupled with another invasion by US after 9/11 implicated Pakistan in other social, political, economic, ecological and environmental problems as well which are proving to be a serious security threats now.

This Paper intends to highlight all those Impacts/issues which have posed gravest security threat to Pakistan in the wake of Afghanistan crisis since 1979 till date.

The Afghan Crisis impacts on Pakistan are divided into two Phases. Phase-I starts since 1979 to 9/11 and Phase II starts since 9/11 till date.

Phase -I: Impacts of Afghan Crisis on Pakistan in pre- 9/11 Period

1. Legitimization of military rule and going nuclear by Pakistan

- Influx of Afghan refugees in Pakistan
- 3. Promotion of Kalashnikov culture
- 4. Drugs and Narcotics
- 5. Increase in organized Crimes

Phase -II: Impacts of Afghan Crisis on Pakistan in Post 9/11 Period:

- 1. Talibanization of Pakistani society
- 2. Wave of Terrorism across Pakistan
 - A) Sectarianism
 - B) Ethno-political Issues
- 3. Baluchistan Crisis

Phase-I: The Impact of Afghan Crisis on Pakistan in Pre 9/11 Period

Legitimization of military rule and going nuclear by Pakistan

At the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), Pakistan was under direct military rule of General Zia.US and other Western democracies were not in good terms with Pakistan due to its military rule and human rights abuses. However, in changed circumstances the US found General Zia and Pakistan as potential player to defeat Soviet Union and confine the communism to its borders, Hence, Zia was accepted by the US and West as de jure and de facto ruler of Pakistan keeping aside all the democratic norms of the so-called first-world.³ During the same period Pakistan took full benefit of the situation and became the first Muslim nuclear State as a part of its deterrence policy against India.⁴

Influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan

As a result of repressive Sour revolution of 1978 and political developments in 1979 in Afghanistan as a result of Soviet invasion, Pakistan experienced the influx of 4 million Afghans refugees. 386 camps for refugees were established in the provinces of Baluchistan and Khyber Pashtoonkhwa with the people, of whom, Afghans shared same culture, language and religion.⁵ Arrival of these Afghans created problems such as environmental, ecological, social, political, and economic. The refugees introduced cross

border smuggling as well. Transport, real estate and labour was occupied by Afghans in the city of Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi.⁶ In the long run refugees not only created ethno-demographic imbalance in the border cities but also contributed towards security problems in Pakistan.

Weaponization of Pakistani Society

Weaponization of Pakistani society started when US sent huge supply of AK47 rifles and other arms/ammunitions for Afghan Mujahideen. Weapons supplied to Afghan Mujahideen groups started smuggling back to Pakistan, and were also directly sold by the Mujahideen, where these weapons were purchased on nominal prices by common Pakistanis. Similarly, Darra market, which is considered to be the world's largest illegal arms' market, consisting roughly 2600 arms shops with 3000 technicians, started producing sophisticated weapons of all kind. During Afghan war various warring groups smuggled different weapons to Pakistan such as rapid fire guns, missiles, anti aircraft guns, hand grenades, rocket launchers, anti tank ammunitions etc. These weapons were spread to every nook and corner of Pakistan. Undoubtly, Present wave of terrorism; militancy and insurgency in FATA and Baluchistan; ethnic and sectarian clashes and organized crimes are the direct result of weaponization of Pakistani society which resulted in the gradual militarization of the society over the past two decades.

Drugs and Narcotics Culture

According to an estimate 90 % of the world's poppy cultivation is carried out in Afghanistan. 70 % of high grade heroin is produced from that poppy. 8 Poppy cultivation flourished in Afghanistan during the Afghan-Soviet war. In order to generate revenue for sustenance of war against USSR, the Afghan warring factions resorted to poppy cultivation and drug trafficking. Afghanistan became a drug heaven being smuggled to all corner of the world from this 'golden crescent'. This business created arms and drug mafia in the bordering areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Gradually heroin became available everywhere in Pakistan. During 1980s drug addicts were

unknown in Pakistani society but soon the number increased to 450000 including 5000 heroin addicts in 1986⁹.

Increase in organized crimes

As the Pakistani society was affected by weaponization, crimes ratio increased to highest level. ¹⁰ Organized crimes such as kidnapping for ransom, street crimes, vehicles snatching, political assassination of religious clerics and workers on the ethnic and sectarian basis became common crimes. With increased militancy in the society, norms of the society changed and display of arms with private guards became a symbol of power and status which resulted in mushroom growth of warlords in the country.

Phase -II: The Impact of Afghan Crisis on Pakistan after 9/11

Talibanization of Pakistani Society

The Taliban movement emerged in the context of civil war and chaotic situation prevalent since 1989 to 1994 in Afghanistan. ¹¹A small group calling itself Taliban succeeded to bring vigilant peace, law and order and to impose sharia law in Afghanistan which got popularity among the masses. 12 These Afghan Taliban were not only supported by Afghan People but by various seminaries and clerics in the province of Baluchistan and Khyber Pashoonkhwa of Pakistan as well. Mulla Omer was appointed the Amir ul Momineen (Commander of the faithful). Taliban captured Kabul in 1996 and hence controlled 90 % of Afghanistan. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates promptly recognized the government of Taliban. Taliban had given refuge to Osama bin Laden and members of its organization who organized themselves in Afghanistan and later, allegedly, perpetrated the incident of 9/11. The US accused Osama and his Al-Qaeda network behind the terrorist attack in new York and Washington and demanded the Taliban government to hand over Osama bin laden. When Taliban refused to surrender Osama and other Al-Qaeda operatives to US authorities, the later with the support of Britain launched military operation on 7th Oct, 2001 against Taliban's military targets and resultantly ousted Taliban and Al-Qaeda from Kabul. The remnants of Taliban and Al-Qaeda were thought to have escaped from US bombing in Afghanistan by a tactical retreat and

were widely believed to have crossed in to Pakistan's tribal areas and as well as in Afghanistan. ¹³ Pakistan in order to curb Taliban and Al-Qaeda launched military operations in Tribal areas. In view of Pakistan's military operation in Tribal areas, the tribal people in 2007 with the help of Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda made their own militant organization which was called as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (Taliban movement of Pakistan). ¹⁴ Baitullah Mehsood was elected as the first leader of TTP. TTP later started terrorist activities in Pakistan primarily against state's security agencies and promoted sectarianism, extremism and militancy in Pakistani society.

Wave of Terrorism across Pakistan

Talibanization promoted the culture of terrorism in Pakistan which includes ambushes on armed forces by TTP; target killing of religious, political and civil society figures, scholars and doctors; blowing up schools, offices of NGOs, bridges and pillions; suicide attacks in mosques and other important places. So far more than 35000 Pakistani have lost their lives in different incidents of terrorism after 9/11 including the loss of 5000 soldiers. During 2010 alone there have been 2113 militant, insurgent and sectarian attacks killing 2913 people and injuring another 5824. In addition, Feeling insecurity from terrorism and worst kind of law and order situation the intelligentsia of Pakistan is moving in search of better and safe future to countries such as Canada, Australia, America, England, United Arab Emirate and South Africa. 16 According to an estimate the brain drain of roughly six million Pakistanis has taken place in the last three decades.¹⁷ Terrorism has also impacted foreign direct investment and capital flight from the country. According to another estimate as much as \$ 200 million is slipping out of Pakistan to foreign countries by Pakistanis and foreign investors. 18 This move has eroded the financial basis of the country. State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) report shows that net foreign investment has declined by 13 percent during the first seven months of the fiscal year 2009.¹⁹

Terrorist attacks in Pakistan (2010)

Province/Area	No of attacks	Killed	Injured
Khyber	459	836	1832
Pashtoonkhwa			
Balochistan	737	600	1117
FATA	720	904	1433
Punjab	62	309	897

Karachi	93	233	436
Sindh	18	5	30
Gilgit/Baltistan	13	7	16
Azad Kashmir	9	4	28
Islamabad	6	15	35
Total	2113	2913	5824

Casualties in Pakistan in 2010

Affected group	Killed	Injured
Militants	5792	2437
Civilians	3570	6539
Police	183	293
Para military Force	50	57
Army	183	523
Rangers	2	0
Frontier Corps	223	434
Total	10003	10283

Nature of attacks

Attacks/Clashes	No of incidents	Killed	Injured
Terrorist attacks	2113	2913	5824
Clashes b/w security forces and	369	2007	877
militants			
Operational attacks by security	260	2631	1495
Forces			
Drone attacks	135	961	383
Border clashes	69	65	53
Ethno-Political violence	233	660	966
Inter- tribal clashes	214	766	685
Total	3393	10003	10283

Pakistan, in its drive against militancy/terrorism in collaboration with the US, has also arrested more than 700 militants of various banned outfits such as Al-Qaeda, Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, Islamic movement of Uzbekistan, Chechens and so forth. The names of some of the prominent militants arrested/killed by Pakistan are as under:²⁰

Prominent militants arrested /Killed in Pakistan since September 11, 2001

Name of the militants	Organization	Arrested From/Killed	Year

		in	of
			Arrest
Osama bin Laden	Al-Qaeda	Abbot	2011
		Abad(Pakistan)	
Khalid Shaikh	Al-Qaeda	Rawalpindi(Pakistan)	2003
Muhammad			
Umer Shaikh	Al-Qaeda	Karachi(Pakistan)	2002
Abu Zubaida	Al-Qaeda	Faisal	2002
		Abad(Pakistan)	
Ramzi bin Shabi	Al-Qaeda	Karachi(Pakistan)	2002
Ahmed Khalfan	Al-Qaeda	Pakistan	2004
Qari Saif ullah Akhtar		Dubai	2004
Tahir Yaldeshove	IMU	Waziristan(Pakistan)	2005
Naik Muhammad	Tribal Leader	Waziristan(Pakistan)	2005
Abdullah Mehsood	TTP Abdullah group	Zhob (Pakistan)	2007
Muhammad Naeem Noor	Al-Qaeda		2004
Khan			
Nasar Mustafa	Al-Qaeda	Quetta (Pakistan)	2005
Amjad Farooqi		Pakistan	2004
Asif Ramzi	Lashkar-e- Jhangvi		
Fazal Al Misri	Al-Qaeda	Karachi (Pakistan)	
Rasman Ginwan	Jamait-e-Islamia	Karachi (Pakistan)	2003
	Indoneshia		
Dawood Badini	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	Quetta(Pakistan)	
Sharib	Harkat ul	Karachi (Pakistan)	2002
	Mujahideen Al-Alami		

Ethno-political strife

A variety of languages, cultures and ethnic groups enrich the society of a country if such pluralist society exists in an amicable way and is free of hatred towards others. However, if their interests are not reconciled, then animosity starts developing in the country leading to violence and bloodshed. Hence, Social fabric of the society of a country begins to disintegrate. Another gruesome impact of Afghan crisis on Pakistan is the spread of ethnic and chauvinist approach of some sub-nationalist ethnic parties. Pakistan is

suffering from this problem since 1985 when violence broke out in Karachi between Urdu and Pashto speaking communities on the petty issue of a road accident in which an Urdu speaking girl was run over by a Pashto speaking driver.²¹ The violence is still on since then and has claimed thousands of lives so far. With operation in Swat and Waziristan, a lot of Pashtoons migrated to Karachi to their near and dear. This shift exacerbated the complexity of the already ongoing ethnic divide and law and order situation.

Sectarianism

Iranian revolution in 1979 and Afghan- Soviet war promoted sectarianism in Pakistan. Iranian government with its spiritual leader Ayat ullah khumini started supporting Shia cause throughout Middle East and Pakistan while General Zia tilted towards promoting Sunni Islam in Pakistan. Islamization process in Pakistan by Zia was an important step towards making Pakistan a purely Sunni state. Islamization process of Zia was looked by Pakistani Shia community as a dangerous step towards discrimination of Shias in Pakistan.²² Hence in 1979, Shia community of Pakistan established a political outfit named as Tehrik- Nifaz e- figah-Jafaria(TNFJ). Importantly, in the background of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and on account of supporting Shia and Sunni cause both by Iran and Saudi Arabia respectively, the relations between the two were at lowest abb. Hence to counter TNFJ, Sunni Clerics with the support Saudi assistance established a political party named as Anjuman Sipha-e Sahaba Pakistan in 1985.²³ Both the rival groups are engage in sectarian clashes since 1986. Till today both the groups, despite ban on their activities by the government of Pakistan, are killing each other's workers and supporters. The clashes between the two have claimed thousands of lives so far.

Baluchistan Crisis

Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan out of four provinces and four federally administered areas and regions. Consisting upon 43% of the total areas of Pakistan and sharing its border with Afghanistan and Iran, Baluchistan occupies most significant geo-strategic position in the region. Feeling aggrieved from Islamabad, the sub-nationalist leaders of

Baluchistan always remained aloof from the interest of Pakistan. Soviet invasion, inter alia, left its impact on the politics of Baluchistan as well. Soviet intelligence net working (KGB) also instigated and exploited the nationalist movements in Baluchistan. As a result of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and weaponization of Pakistani society; the incident of 9/11 and occupation of Afghanistan by US accelerated the secession movement of sub-nationalist of Baluchistan. In addition, the discovery of huge mineral resources and strategically important Gwader port has increased the interest of international economic players in the region which is benefiting the separatists as they look for their financial and moral support for outside world. It has also been learnt that CIA, MOSSAD (Israel), RAW (India) and Afghan intelligence agencies are training, equipping, financing and then sending anti-state separatist elements to Baluchistan from Afghanistan to destabilize it and create unrest in Pakistan. 24 At present Baluchistan liberation army (BLA), Baluchistan Liberation Front (BLF), Baluchistan Republican Army (BRA), Laskhar-e- Balochistan and Baloch Musala Difa Tanzeem are actively engage in separatist activities. 25 However, the government of Pakistan has used effective strategy to counter these elements and quell the movement.

Government of Pakistan and National security measure:

In order to deal with the menace of terrorism, exterminate Taliban, Al-Qaeda its affiliates and to curb the Secession movement launched by secular sub-nationalist in the province of Baluchistan, the government of Pakistan has taken a number concrete measures. That includes:

- Military operation in Tribal areas and Swat
- Rising Tribal Lashkars/militias against Taliban
- Clear, hold and build strategy
- > Economic incentives and relief packages
- > Ban on terrorist out fits etc

Taliban's insurgency in Tribal areas of Pakistan in the wake of the arrival of Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives after 9/11 and a secession movement launched by Secular sub-nationalist in the province of Baluchistan posed a security threat to the state of Pakistan. Hence, the government of Pakistan was compelled to take harsh measures against the insurgents and separatist elements. Pakistan launched a number of military operations such as:

- Operation Sher- Dil (Lion's heart) in Malakand region
- Operation Rahe-Rast (Path to Salvation) in Swat region
- > Operation Rahe-Nijat (Path to get rid) in South Waziristan region
- Operation Daraghlum and Bia Daraghlum (I have come and have come again) in Khyber Agency region
- > Operation Brakhna (Lightning)

During all these military operations conducted by military and Para military forces with the support of Local Lashkars (Tribal Forces) more than 700 hundred Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives have been apprehended and thousands have been killed while Security forces have lost 5000 strong personnel. Almost all the areas have been cleared by security apparatus from militants and insurgents. There does not exists any NO GO AREA in Pakistan now. After clearing all the strong holds from Taliban militants and Baloch separatists, the government of Pakistan has launched socio-economic development activities of the areas in FATA and in the province of Baluchistan. Schools, Hospitals, bridges and roads are being made again in the affected areas. In addition mega projects have also been initiated in both the areas to bring both these backward areas at par with the rest of Pakistan. In FATA the people have been given political rights and the areas are being streamlined. In Baluchistan, under Baluchistan package 3900 youngster have been provided employments. ²⁶As a special incentive, 8339 persons of Baluchistan have recruited in Pakistan army. 27 In various top levels educational institutions the quota for the students of FATA and Baluchistan has been increased 100%. The government of Pakistan has also banned all the terrorist groups and has freezed their accounts to paralyze these organization from being operating freely and collecting funds for their terrorist activities. These socio-economic development Packages have changed the mind set of common people in the affected areas in Pakistan.

Conclusion

On account of terrorism, Taliban insurgency in FATA, secession movement of the secular sub-nationalists in Baluchistan, weaponization of Pakistani society and rampant societal crimes started in the wake of Afghan crisis since 1979-till date; Pakistan faces extensive internal and external threats and challenges to its physical and human security. Hence, Pakistan today is at the crossroad. Its Physical and human security threats have hampered prosperity of the people and progress of the state. Pakistani state and society have also suffered huge economic, infrastructural and human cost due to militancy and terrorism, because Pakistan has lost \$43 billion and 35000 people in war against terror only. Now the government of Pakistan with the help of its allies on war on terror has formulated a comprehensive multidimensional strategy, its military operations in various affected areas and its socio-economic incentives and relief packages for the people of FATA and Baluchistan, that is working substantively to stabilize the situation thereby creating a climate that is supportive of socio-economic activities in the country, bringing back the lost atmosphere of peace and leads on the path of sustainable development.

Endnote:

- $^{\rm 1}$ Talat Hussain, Afghanistan's complex situation and its implications on Pakistan, Master thesis, p.11
- ² AZ Hilali, 'Cost and Benefits of Afghan War for Pakistan'.p.3
- ³ Sundra Nath Kaushik, Politics of Islamization in Pakistan: A study of Zia regime, New Delhi South Asia Publoshers,1993,pp.165-167
- $^4\,$ A Z Hilali, 'Cost and Benefits of Afghan War for Pakistan'.p.3 $^5 \text{Ibid.p.8}$
- 6 Imrana Beghum (2010) ' The Impact of Afghan-Soviet war on Pakistan' Master thesis, Area study center, Europe, Karachi university. 115-116
- ⁷ Ibid.195
- 8 AZ Hilali, 'Cost and Benefits of Afghan War for Pakistan'.p.13
- ⁹ Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, (2004), The Afghan refugees and Pakistan's Internal Security Problems, P.18
- ¹⁰ Nadeem Qaiser (1991), Pakistan Studies: An investigation in to the Political economy 1948-1988: Karachi, Oxford University press, p. 125
- Imrana Beghum (2010) 'The Impact of Afghan-Soviet war on Pakistan' PhD thesis, Area study center, Europe, Karachi university,p.200
- ¹² Time Magazine, New York: October 1, 2001, Vol 158, No 13, pp.33-35.
- ¹³ Zahid Hussain (2007),Front Line Pakistan: A struggle with militant Islam, London: I.B,Tauris,p.143
- ¹⁴ Herald, july2008,vol.39.No.7,p.52
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- ¹⁶ Syed Jaffar Askari, The Nation, Oct 9,2008
- 17 Ibid
- ¹⁸ Daily Times, September 28,2004
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- ²² Mariam Abu Zaib, The regional dimension of sectarian conflict in Pakistan, in Christophe jafferlot (ed),p.115
- ²³ Imrana Beghum (2010) 'The Impact of Afghan-Soviet war on Pakistan' PhD thesis, Area study center, Europe, Karachi University. 152
- ²⁴ General Aslam Baig (Rtd), an Interview with 'Daily Mashriq', Pakistan on 29/7/2011
- 25 Muhammad Amir Rana (2011), Pakistan Security report 2010, Pakistan Institute of Peace study,p.25
- ²⁶ Ibid.25
- ²⁷ I bid.25